

News from the Wyoming Department of Health

Thursday, March 4, 2010

Grant Expected to Strengthen Children's Mental Health Treatment

Wyoming has been awarded a federal grant to help improve healthcare quality and delivery systems for children with serious behavioral health disorders who are enrolled in Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP).

The CHIP program is known in Wyoming as Kid Care CHIP; the state's Medicaid program is known as EqualityCare.

Wyoming partnered with Maryland, Georgia and the Centers for Health Care Strategies to submit a grant application, which was awarded nearly \$11 million. Wyoming's share will be \$450,000 per year for five years.

Wyoming will use the federal grant to implement and evaluate provider performance measures and use health information technologies such as pediatric electronic health records. A key planned strategy is the use of a care management entity to help monitor and administer mental health services provided to eligible Wyoming children.

"We have been concerned about the number of children with behavioral health issues who have been sent away from their communities for treatment," said Rodger McDaniel, Wyoming Department of Health deputy director for mental health and substance abuse services. "We want to ensure these children receive the most appropriate care for their needs. The care management entity can help that happen by bringing together the various organizations and people involved in meeting a child's treatment and educational needs."

"Basically, we would like to use this grant to improve access to quality care closer to home for Wyoming children and youth with serious behavioral health challenges," McDaniel said.

"Wyoming will work with other states that face many of the same challenges in this area that we do," McDaniel said. "We will share our rural perspective with them and expect to also learn from their experiences."

The new grant is funded by the Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2009 (CHIPRA). The Wyoming Department of Health (Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services Division and EqualityCare) worked together with the Department of Corrections, Department of Family Services, Department of Workforce Services and the Governor's Office to prepare the application.

"We are honored to be selected to be a part of this effort to establish a quality mental health care system for children," McDaniel said.

For more information about the grant, please contact Eydie Trautwein, interagency coordinator with the Wyoming Department of Health, at (307) 777-6493.

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